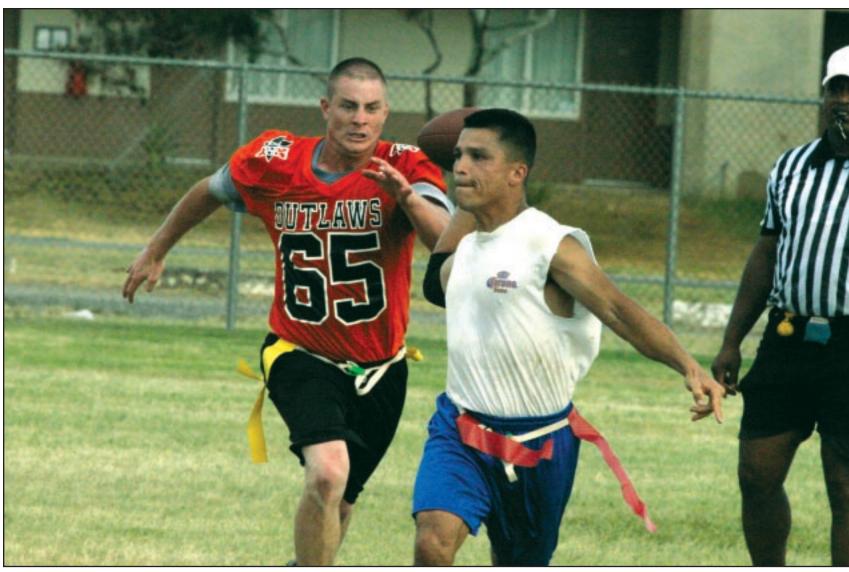
Hawaii Marine C Section July 23, 2004



Shama Hernandez, quarterback with Headquarters Bn., releases the pigskin as defenders from CSSG-3 swarm around, collapsing the pocket. Hernandez led the Warriors to victory in the 101 Days of Summer Flag Football Tournament, Saturday at Pollack Field.

# HQBN hits the pigskin

Pfc. Rich Mattingly Combat Correspondent

The Warriors of Headquarters Battalion fought long and hard Saturday to come out as top dogs in the 2nd Annual 101 Summer Flag Football Days of Tournament.

The 101 Days tournament, hosted by Counseling Center, took over Pollack Field under a scorching sun, with six teams vying for the flag football crown.

Having determined their tournament seeds during games on July 15 and 16, the teams faced off in single-elimination games, often one right after another.

With a quick tempo, head referee and base SACC representative Quinton Redmon got the day started with a matchup of perennial champs: the Outlaws of Combat Service Support Group 3 versus Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 24.

Relying on their talent for the long ball and the receiving skills of Ray Bell, the Outlaws eliminated MALS-24, 21-12.

The second game of the day featured the yellow-shirted Patrol Squadron 4 and the Warriors of Headquarters Battalion.

With the QB-receiver combo of Shama Hernandez to David Borrego showing up early and often, and key interceptions by Marine Corps Community Services and Ryan Denniston and King Solomon sponsored by the Base Substance Abuse Flowers, the Warriors put a visibly upset VP-4 team to bed.

> Then it was CSSG-3's turn to play again, taking it to the house on the Marine Corps Air Facility team. Dominating MCAF on the arm of Ezekiel Winchester, the Outlaws earned a spot to play in the championship game against the Warriors.

> "It's tough to play three games in a row like we're doing today. It's hard to come out fresh," said a tired Ray Bell, who accounted for most of the Outlaws points in the early rounds with some amazing, over-the-shoulder grabs.

Both teams, breathing heavily and already covered with a mixture of sweat, bruises and sunburn, lined up for the gridiron grudge match that would determine the championship.

After the first two possessions, it was clear that neither defense was willing to let Hernandez or Winchester air it out at will to their receiver corps.

Late in the first half, it began to look like playing three previous games was definitely taking a toll on the quarterbacks of each team. "Interception" became the word of the day until Hernandez nailed one of his streaking receivers to put Headquarters up, 13-6.

Robert Mitchell, one of a pair of Warriors whose height and agility gave the team a distinct advantage on both sides of the ball, grabbed the point after throw to give Headquarters Battalion a lead they would not relinquish.

See **FOOTBALL**, C-6

## Kaneohe Klipper continues to grow

**Bobbie Brock** MCCS Public Relations

There certainly is no shortage of golf courses in Hawaii. With a climate conducive to playing year-round, the courses are as consistently busy as the crews that keep them up to par.

The Kaneohe Klipper Golf Course on Marine Corps Base Hawaii is no exception.

With the arrival of new golf course superintendent, Clint Tolbert, in May of 2003, the condition of the course has improved two-fold. Tolbert came aboard during the replanting of the greens and tee boxes to Seashore Paspalm grass.

"This type of grass is much easier to maintain, explained Tolbert. "It is weed-controlled and watered with salt water instead of pesticides, which is environmentally safe and less expensive to maintain."

Another long-awaited project unfolding is the new cart paths. The concrete paths will be a big improvement from the bumpy ride through the potholed gravel paths. The construction started on the 18th hole and completion is expected at the end of October.

Still other projects include renovating the drainage ditch on Holes 8 and 11. New ball washers can be spotted throughout the course, and the addition of bunkers to Holes 2 and 8 will increase the challenge nonethe-

The course is being renovated in sections, to minimize inconvenience to golfers. The back nine holes are currently closed Monday through Friday and are scheduled to reopen the end of August, at which time the front nine will close down for bunker

See **KLIPPER**, C-6

## VP-4 leaves Old School in the shadows



James Gardner, of VP-4's personnel administration, maneuvers around Old School player Mel Beach, a boat repair assistant for the base marina, during Monday night's Cpl. Jessica M. Mills Sports Editor

Friendly competition between the sea services can be a healthy pastime for service members. However, when Patrol Squadron 4 defeated Old School (the Combat Service Support Group 3 team), 48-35, during an Intramural 30 & Over Basketball League game Monday, "friendly" was thrown out of the game.

The contest, in particular, was important to the players of VP-4, who were 5 and 2, and in second place in the league. If they had defeated Old School, they would have tied CSSG-3 for first place, and stood a good chance at the champi-

The game kicked off with extremely high energy on both sides. Old School's Michael Knapp took one of the first shots, and he swiped his first threepointer of the game off the right side-

Even that early in the game, both teams were fighting for the lead.

Within the first three minutes the teams were tied, 4-4. Throughout the first half, both rebounded back and

forth, alternatively scoring.

When the score was tied again, 6-6, Old School made another attempt to pull ahead. The Group players intercepted a pass from VP-4 and worked the ball into the hands of Knapp, who in turn scored his second three-pointer of the evening.

Old School took the lead, 9-6.

Unfortunately for Old School, VP-4 countered with two layups back-toback, reclaiming the lead, 10-9. At that point, Old School's Coach William Wharton called a time-out.

"I'm just trying to slow my guys down and get their heads back in the game," said Wharton. "We can play slow and methodical and still make our points."

After the time-out, Old School went on a point spree, and Louie Reyna, the fiscal officer for CSSG-3, and Arnell Rivers, a radio operator with Alpha Battery, 1/12, assisted in raising the score, 18-10. Knapp then became energized, and shot his fourth three-pointer from the left sideline and raised the

Although VP-4 could have lost heart

after Old School's impressive point spree, the squadron players did not. James Gardner, with personnel administration, and Randy O'Neal, a storekeeper, both with VP-4, worked together to maneuver down the courts and score back-to-back three pointers, closing in on Old School, 21-16.

As VP-4 clipped upon Old School's heels, the CSSG-3 team retaliated with a layup followed by another three-pointer from Knapp — his fifth of the night.

But VP-4 wasn't the type to give up, and seconds before the buzzer, Gardner scored a well arced three-pointer from center court, ending the first half, 25-20.

In the second half, VP-4's defense bucked up and its offense scored three shots in the first six minutes, taking the lead, 26-25.

The teams continued to go head-tohead, and throughout the second half, the lead bounced from one to the other.

With three minutes left in the game, and VP-4 ahead, 32-28, Scott Alms, the P-3 tactical coordinator for VP-4, extended the squadron's lead, 35-28,

See **BBALL**, C-6

## BASE SPORTS

**Edward Hanlon V** MCCS Public Relations

July

27 / Tuesday

Semper

Athletic Office.

Intramural Football Coaches Meeting This Tuesday, interested coaches for the Intramural Football league should make a pass by the

Fit

meeting begins at 2 p.m., and intramural coordinator Joe Au will be present to answer any questions or comments raised.

Center's

Call the Athletics Office at 254-7591 for further details.

#### August

3 / Tuesday

Summer Swim Sessions -Head to the K-Bay base pool and bring the kids for Summer Swim Lessons. This last of the two-week courses designed for swimmers of all ages and abilities can boost your kids' confidence in the water.

This session goes from 1 to 5 p.m. and costs \$35. Call 254-7655 for more details.

### **Ongoing**

YA Flag Football Registration — Marine Corps Community Services' Youth Activities League are bringing football back to Kaneohe Bay. Youth born between '90 and '98 are invited to join one of the leagues.

The season runs from Sept. 11 until Oct. 30, and practice begins Aug. 30.

Registration is happening now, so stop by Bldg. 5082 to register, or call YA at 254-7611 for more information.

Cost is \$40 for YA members, \$50 for nonmembers.

Volunteer coaches are also needed to make this program a success.

Youth Bowling — Lil' bowlers ages 4 through 6 can now get in on the pin action in the Pee Wee Summer Bowling League, which will run every Saturday through Sept. 25 at 10

Older bowlers, ages 7 through 21, can check out the Summer Junior Bowling League, which will run concurrent with the Pee Wee League.

Both leagues will host awards banquets on Oct. 2. Call 254-7664 for more information.

**Gone Fishin'** — Join Mahalo Kai Fishing Charters for a day beyond the bay. Located at the base marina here, the charter contractor now has two different boats to accommodate all of your fishing needs.

Check out the new boat, the Bill Collector, especially built for charter fishing at its finest, and then spend your day with family and friends off the coast of Windward Oahu, catching some of the ocean's most exotic and tasty fish.

Call 254-7667 for more information.

Youth Activities Cheerlead-

ing — Registration is currently underway for Youth Cheerleading. Numerous leagues are open for children born between '88 and '98. Practice begins in August; however, the begins in October.

Cost is \$40 for Youth Activities members, and \$50 for nonmembers, and volunteer coaches are still needed to make this league a success.

Youth Activities events are made possible by sponsorship from Windward Community

and the Hawaii Youth Sports Federal Credit Union. Call 254-7611 for more information about youth programs.

> NASCAR Sundays — Race to Kahuna's Sports Bar & Grill on Sundays to catch the excitement of the NASCAR races. The club will open at 8 a.m.

for breakfast and allows a pit stop for lunch and dinner too, before closing at 8 p.m.

All E-5 and below patrons are welcome to wear their favorite race driver's gear and receive \$1 off wings (dine-in only).

Youth Sailing Classes — Kids looking for something fun to do this summer can learn to sail their own boat, and be their own captain. Ages 8 to 18 are welcome to check out the two-week Junior Basic Course, Sailing which is scheduled for Monday

Classes get underway from 9 a.m. until noon, or 1 till 4 p.m. Courses are sched-

through Friday.

uled throughout the summer at a cost of only \$99.

For more information on how your youngster can become a certified sailor, call the marina at 254-7667.

ment — Look no further for 254-7610.

economical entertainment because Mondays through Thursdays all E-5 and below receive free rental shoes and discounted games at only \$1.50 a game.

The discount is good for open play, and does not qualify for tournaments, leagues or unit functions. Call the K-Bay Lanes now to get the spin at 254-7693.

Friends of K-Bay Bowling – Every Tuesday, K-Bay Lanes is

hosting the Friends of K-Bay Mixed Bowling League. The league is open to all authorized patrons and their guests and begins at 6 p.m.

Don't split; call 254-7664 for more information.

Okinawa Kenpo Karate —

Every Tuesday and Thursday, join the newest contractor at MCCS Youth Activities for Okinawa Kenpo

Karate Kobudo classes, held from 6 to 7:30 p.m. in Bldg. 1391, located behind the 7-Day

Store.

Adults and children are welcome, and classes cost only \$35 for adults, \$25 for children and an additional \$20 for other family members.

Call the Youth Activities **Inexpensive, Fun Entertain-** Office for more information at

# "I play football because I love the game." Robert Mitchell

**Unit:** Base Fuels, Headquarters Bn. **Billet:** Mobile Refueler **Team:** Headquarters Bn. Warriors

**Hometown:** Ft. Stewart, Ga.

- Mitchell grabbed six interceptions and two touchdown passes in flag football action Saturday. • He was offered a scholarship to South Eastern College, but
- blew out his knee in 12th grade. • Nicknamed "The Truth" by fellow players, he is fabled to be
- deadly when it comes to playing free safety and wide receiver.

### **Intramural Softball Standings**

	Wins	Losses
3rd Radio Bn.	23	2
HQBN	18	5
HSL-37 "Easy Riders"	21	6
3rd Marine "PSC"	16	7
CPRW-2	15	7
MAG-24	17	8
Dental "Young Guns"	15	9
CSSG-3 "Supply"	13	12
CSSG-3 "Electronics"	11	13
One Flew East	9	16
MCAF	7	15
Band "Stingers"	6	17
VPU-2	6	18
VP-4	5	16
CAC "Hickerbillies"	3	22

Intramural Softball standings are current as of July 14.

## COMMUNITY SPORTS =

#### **State Offers Free Recreation**

The Hawaii Department of Land & Natural Resources is offering education classes for the public. Subjects covered include firearms and archery safety, survival and first aid, wildlife identification and conservation, regulations, game care and outdoor responsibility.

Attendance at two sessions is required for certification, and classes are open to anyone 10 years or older who enjoys the outdoors — not just hunters.

The next two-day session is today from 5:45 to 10 p.m. and Saturday from 7:45 a.m. to 4 p.m. in Classroom #A-212 at the Nimitz Business Center, 1130 N. Nimitz Hwy. (Drive up the ramp to the classroom, which is the first room on the right.)

A picture ID is required for entry to the sessions. For more information about outdoor education, or to sign up for this course, call 587-0200.

#### MLS Soccer Camp Kicks Off

The Hickam/Pearl Harbor American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO) is holding its final registration for fall youth soccer on July 31 from 2 to 6 p.m. at Hickam Air Force Base's "BXtra." Registration is open to boys and girls ages 4 – 18 years old, and the season will run from August through early November.

The AYSO registration fee is \$55, and

proof of age is required for first-time registrants. Parents can preregister by calling 834-5979 or e-mail registrar@ayso region188.org for more information.

#### **Coast Guard Offers Boating & GPS Classes**

•The state of Hawaii has passed a law more details about either course. requiring all boaters sailing

more than one mile offshore to carry either a VHF radio or a satellite location device. Therefore, many boaters are now acquiring GPS devices to assist in navigation and to aid the Coast Guard in finding them when lost.

Just in time, Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 18 is offering a "Global Positioning System for

Mariners" course that will teach boaters how to use the new technology, Saturday from 2 to 5 p.m., and Sunday from 1 to 4

You can reserve your seat in Flotilla 18's class at West Marine, 111 Sand Island Access Road, to learn the ins and outs of GPS. Cost is \$35 dollars and includes the course textbook.

•Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 18 is also offering a "How to Read Nautical Charts" course in the party room at

McDonald's Uptown at Pearlridge Mall, Aug. 7 from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. Cost is \$35 and includes a manual and exams.

This course meets U.S. Coast Guard, state and national boating law administrators' requirements.

Call Rick Saltzman at 952-9696 for

#### **Chiropractor Provides** Free Wellness Workshop

"Power Stretching" teaches participants how to reach their optimal health, naturally, in fun and practical workshops led by Dr. Chip Abbadessa, a graduate of the University of the State of New York and the Los Angeles

> College of Chiropractic. The next Power Stretching workshop is scheduled for Aug

10 from 6 to 6:45 p.m., in Room 420 of the Castle Professional Center at 46-001 Kamehameha Highway in Kaneohe.

This workshop is free, as well as "Weight Training 101" offered on Sept. 7. Call 234-5535 for more details.

#### **Hale Koa Hosts Summer Fitness**

If tennis is your sport, "do" the Labor Day Weekend Tournament, Sept. 4 – 5. Call the Hale Koa Activities Desk for more details at 955-0555, ext. 546.

Also, be sure to ask about future hap-

penings at The Point Health Club at the Hale Koa Hotel. Call the health club at 955-9155 for more information.

#### **Sports Racing Abounds**

Solo II or Autocross racing will be held at the Hawaii Raceway Park at the Campbell Industrial Park on Oahu and costs \$25 per driver. About 70 to 90 cars normally compete, from stock vehicles to racecars. This event's purely amateur;

anybody can participate. Each driver will receive four runs through the sports car course, and the driver with the single, fastest time in the class will win. Points acquired throughout the year accumulate for prizes and trophies by year's end. Minimum participation in more than half of the year's races, however, is required to be in the running for points and the run-off championship.

Autocross races are scheduled Aug. 1, Oct. 3, Nov. 7 and Dec. 5. For more details, call Curtis Lee at 262-5987.

Also, Wheel-to-Wheel and Solo I regional sports car races will get underway at Hawaii Raceway Park. All drivers must pass a driver's school to obtain a competition license, as the cars are raced at a much higher rate of speed (up to 140 mph) and passing is permitted.

Wheel-to-Wheel races are scheduled on Sept. 6 and Nov. 13. For more information, call Ed Kemper at 524-0330.



## THE BOTTOM LINE

(Editor's Note: "The Bottom Line" is the Hawaii Marine's weekly sports commentary from two sports aficionados who rarely see eye-to-eye when it comes to America's one true obsession — sports. Chances are you'll either agree with one of their takes or disagree with both.

Our two resident sports junkies welcome your e-mails of no more than 250 words. We will print the top comments of the week from our readers.

Send "Readers Strike Back" comments to editor@hawaiimarine.com. "If you don't speak up, you won't be heard!"

## Who won the Shaquille O'Neal sweepstakes?

Capt. K.D. Robbins

The Professor

One cannot deny the magnitude of losing a player that is 7 feet tall and weighs 360 pounds.

That is a fact. There is no way around it. There is no way to explain it. You only do it and reap that which you sow.

So, in the end, how could the Lakers, after trading the most dominant player in the NBA, remotely do better than the Heat in this transaction? Well, Miami fans, the truth hurts.

Last season, the Florida Marlins, led by a talented group of young pitchers and a resurgent warrior catcher named Ivan Rodriguez, shocked the sports world as they defeated the New York Yankees (pinstripes included) to take the World Series. However, is anyone naïve enough to believe that the Marlins are a better organization than the Steinbrenners, pardon, Yankees?

The answer is no.

Following their embarrassment against a better Detroit Pistons team, the Lakers were forced — that's right, forced — to make changes. It all started with the removal of an emotionally exhausted coach and reached its pinnacle with the trade involving the perennial NBA All-Star center.

Shaq demanded a trade. However, even if you keep the consistently overweight, aging superstar in your lineup, you cannot deny that his team not only lost with his consistent dominance of the middle, but his team lost bad!

A change had to be made.

The fact is that following the loss to the Pistons, the uncertainty of Karl Malone's status and the dismissal of the most successful coach in NBA history, the Lakers were not destroying their chances of winning. They were only reloading for the future.

See PROFESSOR, C-4

**Sgt. Joe Lindsay** The Goat

You do not trade Wilt Chamberlain. You do not trade Kareem Abdul-Jabbar. You do not trade Bill Russell. And, you do not trade Shaquille O'Neal.

Yet, of the four most dominating centers in NBA history listed above, only Russell was never actually traded. The Boston Celtics kept him even when his productivity dipped, surrounded him with Hall of Fame caliber talent, and continued to win championships.

In all, Russell won 11 rings in 13 years, including the final two seasons.

Chamberlain won rings twice after being traded, once with the Philadelphia 76'ers, and once with the Los Angeles Lakers.

Abdul-Jabbar got five rings with the Lakers, after the Milwaukee Bucks traded him for Junior Bridgeman, Dave Myers, Elmore Smith and Brian

Come to think of it, that deal sounds a lot like the Lakers shipping Shaq to the Miami Heat for Caron Bultler, Brian Grant and Lamar Odom. Not a particularly good move.

Oh sure, we know some of the reasons why the Lakers did it — Kobe didn't really like the Big Fella, Shaq's getting older, his productivity is dropping and his salary hovers near \$30 million a year, but don't believe for a second that Shag's demanding of a trade had anything to do with it. That was just pride and ego talking.

If the Lakers — i.e., Dr. Jerry Buss and Mitch Kupchack — just would have used a little finesse, they could have kept Shaq, and probably also resigned Bryant as well. Instead, they sent O'Neal down the river, albeit on a luxury yacht.

By doing so, the Lakers all but guaranteed Kobe would re-sign with them,

See GOAT, C-4

### EADERS STRIKE BACK

" 'The Bottom Line' doesn't have fluff, though, and that is why I read it. The article on Coach K is a prime example. Nobody has the guts to dog out Duke, but 'The

Bottom Line' does."

Dear "Bottom Line,"

I just PCS'd [made a permanent change of station move] here from Camp Pendleton, and have also been stationed at Camp Fuji, as well as been to many other bases.

Every base I go to, I always make it a point to check out the base paper. I have noticed one thing in common with them all. They are all "unsat" [unsatisfacto-

Please don't take this personally, but the Hawaii Marine is no exception. However, I have found one glimmer of hope in your paper, and that is the "Bottom Line" articles.

In the past, I have picked up a base all they seem willing to print.

newspaper once, found them basically worthless, and then never read them again, except to check for movies and stuff like that.

I find myself bucking this trend with your paper.

Every week, I grab the sports section out, throw away the rest and go straight to page 3. Why the best part of your paper is hidden on page 3 goes back to what I said earlier about base newspapers, but I will leave that subject alone, or you probably won't be able to print this.

In fact, as I read this over, I realize you won't print this because it doesn't make everything seem perfect like the base newspapers try to. Fluff and more fluff is

"The Bottom Line" doesn't have fluff, though, and that is why I read it. The article on Coach K is a prime example. Nobody has the guts to dog out Duke, but "The Bottom Line" does.

Duke is for pretty rich boys. Coach K couldn't hang with the Lakers if he wanted to, just like Steve Spurrier couldn't hang in the NFL and Rick Pitino couldn't hang in the NBA.

Coach K needs to be in his insulated little world. Coach K doesn't have the guts to leave Duke, and I bet your paper doesn't have the guts to print this letter.

> — Sincerely, Gary Goss Warner Robins, Ga.

## SPORTS AROUND THE CORPS

# Marines weather Armed Forces playoffs

Cpl. Beth Zimmerman New York City Public Affairs

**NEW YORK** — A chilly wind swirled through the trees and whipped up orange dust around nine leathernecks on the Brooklyn softball field here, July 14. It dragged the cooler evening temperature lower, to a point that seemed well beneath July averages.

Then the rain hit, in spite of the Marines playing softball. Almost seeming to realize how far into the game they were, it rained even harder.

But, amphibious by nature, the Marines ignored Mother Nature and continued to play through rain, thunder, and then lightning. The umpire finally called them in from the outfield.

These Marines who endured the devil dogs from Communication Battalion in Brooklyn, were well into their second game of the Armed Forces double-elimination playoffs at Fort Hamilton, an Army base in Brooklyn. They had competed against teams made up of other service members from New York City, prior to the playoffs when softball started in May.

Marines trashed the Army's military police team with an 11-point lead making for an early end to the game.

"They had to end the game early because we were so far ahead of them in points," said Marine player Donald Herring. "It was pretty motivating."

Some of the Marine Corps recruiters in the area competed individually on a couple of the softball teams. But, according to 6th Comm, it had the only team made up entirely of Marines. Members believe that gave them an advantage over the other teams.

"We have more all-around athletes than any of the other teams," said Marine Coach Michael Taft. Because of this, he added, it's easy to trade Marines from the stands as players if need be.

"We have [6th Comm] Marines all over right now," said Herring. "They're on leave, preparing for deployment or taking part in annual training."

For those reasons, Herring explained, the same nine or 10 players did not play every softball game during the season and in playoffs.

"I was just filling in," said Marine player Gene Williams, who pitched dur-During a playoff game July 13, ing the games July 13 and 14. The



Donald Herring (center foreground) fills the catcher position on the Marines' softball team during the Armed Forces playoff game at Brooklyn's Fort Hamilton, an Army base, July 14, moments before a thunderstorm interrupted the game.

annual leave.

The esprit de corps these Marines regularly display, motivated them to play

"usual" pitcher was out of town on through the thunderstorm. With continued enthusiasm, they envision the playoff trophy is within their grasp, a forerunner to the championship.

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#### **PROFESSOR**, From C-3

A change had to be made.

Brian Grant is a waste of space and dreadlocks. Lamar Odom is a waste of talent and a liberty risk, at best, and the future NBA first round draft choice is a gamble. However, one player makes this deal worthwhile: Caron

Butler is a superstar in the making. At the ripe age of 24, the 6-foot, 7-inch, 220-pound small forward is loaded with talent, discipline and — best of all — humility.

With Kobe on the floor, there is only room for one ego. In fact, with Kobe on the floor, there is barely room for any ego. Bryant more than satisfies the entire Lakers' organization in the selfishness department. This said, Butler is the best thing that could happen to Kobe Bryant and the Lakers. (Can anybody say Michael and Scottie?)

Bottom Line: The Lakers had to trim payroll. Like any great organization, they didn't rebuild, they merely reloaded.

Kobe and Caron will be special. They lead an athletic team that will do absolutely nothing less than entertain those "entertainers" who so frequently adorn the Staples' sidelines.

More importantly, with the loss of three starters and a draft choice, the Heat is forced to completely restructure their team around the aging, yet inspired, big man.

Stan Van Gundy will feel as much, if not more, pressure than the great Phil Jackson did just a season ago when Sports Illustrated, USA Today and even The Goat predicted a Lakers title with the "Dream Team" (Kobe, Shaq, Malone and Payton). The only problem is, they were not

And after the loss of three starters, neither is the Heat.

#### GOAT, From C-3

which he did, and also got a couple decent players while unloading a huge salary.

The only problem is, they aren't going to win anymore, at least not for a while.

The Heat, on the other hand, became instant championship contenders the second O'Neal signed on the dotted line.

Bottom Line: Miami is paying big bucks for O'Neal, but they are already reaping dividends from the deal. Seats to Heat games are becoming the hottest ticket in town, and projections show that the increased ticket sales in the upper level alone are going to bring the franchise nearly \$10 million more than last year.

Also, all those extra people in the stands means more

money from concessions and parking, estimated to bring in another \$2 million. And the increase in sponsorship contracts could conceivably be limitless.

Basically, Shaq is going to pay for himself, and the Miami Heat are going to be in the running for an NBA championship for the next couple of years.

In L.A., Kobe is going to score around 40 points a game for a mediocre Lakers team — providing he is found not guilty at his upcoming rape trial.

Who got the better deal? It's not even close.

Everybody, together now, Big Shaqwillie Style, and to imaginary music. C'mon, you know the words. Don't act like you don't.

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Miami, uh, uh. South Beach. Bringin' the heat, uh. Here we go ...

"Welcome to Miami (bienvenido a miami) ... I'm going

to Miami. Welcome to Miami."